

Metropolitan

# King County Council

*News*



## STEVE HAMMOND DISTRICT 9



King County

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Dear friend:

Probably the most often asked question since my election to the King County Council has been, "How do you like your job?"

I can answer that I have found the past year to be very fulfilling. The variety of issues that the King County Council faces is truly amazing. I have enjoyed working together with many of you for a more balanced and effective county government.

This year I have chaired the Regional Water Quality Committee. This committee, which is made up of elected officials from King County, various cities throughout the County, and water and sewer districts, has the task of overseeing the policies that govern our wastewater system throughout King County. I hope you will take the time to read about the workings of this committee on page 2 of this newsletter.

Additionally, I serve on the Law, Justice, and Human Services Committee and the Growth Management and Unincorporated Areas Committee. Land use in King County has been a "hot topic" this year as members are reviewing the County's Comprehensive Plan, which sets the policies for growth in King County. A new Critical Areas Ordinance is proposing sweeping changes to the former Sensitive Areas Ordinance. These changes, if adopted, will have huge impacts on property owners. I hope that you will have a chance to read more about this on page 3.

I look forward to hearing from many of you as we move forward to make King County government more responsive and accountable. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Steve Hammond  
King County Councilmember

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# RWQC Faces Brightwater Challenges

## Stable Rates and Cost Savings Adopted

This year I have accepted the responsibility to be the Chair of the Regional Water Quality Committee (RWQC). The RWQC develops, reviews, and recommends countywide policies and plans for water quality and sewer service, including rate policies and planning related to major facility planning and siting. This mission is carried out primarily by the King County Wastewater Treatment Division. King County residents agreed in 1958 to build and operate the regional wastewater utility to clean the polluted waters of Lake Washington and Puget Sound. Since then, the County has worked to prevent water pollution and improve water quality.

This year, there are several important issues being deliberated by this Committee. The first is the issue of building a new facility to address the growth in

mitted to seek every possible opportunity to find cost-saving policies, including value engineering, phasing options and finance assumptions.

Recently, the Committee reviewed and then the King County Council approved two charges related to the provision of wastewater treatment services – the *sewer rate* that is collected from all users of the County's wastewater services, and the *capacity charge* that is collected from new customers to pay for the cost of new facilities and capital projects needed to accommodate growth.

Although the County usually adopts three-year rates, because of the uncertainty of the estimated costs related to Brightwater, I have supported a more prudent two-year sewer rate. Currently the rate for sewer services is \$23.40 per month, and the charge will be increased to \$25.60. This shorter term will allow for a stable rate for the next two years and provide the opportunity to adjust the rate for any savings we are able to identify in the longer term.



our region. This new wastewater treatment plant, called Brightwater, will serve residents in portions of King and Snohomish counties. This project will be a challenge. With the adopted policy of *growth pays for growth*, RWQC is looking for all possible avenues to keep the costs within acceptable limits. I have com-

mitted to seek every possible opportunity to find cost-saving policies, including value engineering, phasing options and finance assumptions.

A policy adopted by the County Council prior to my serving on this body was the decision that *growth pays for growth*. Although this sounds appealing in theory, the reality is an enormous increase in the charge paid only by new customers. This year, when the County Council adopted the new capacity charge, I co-sponsored a number of amendments that require fiscal accountability.

These amendments also seek greater flexibility for rate payers, including significant savings when new customers pay the capacity charge up front.

Clearly these increases are significant, and I will continue to work closely with the Wastewater Treat-



# Council Scrutinizes Proposed Land Use Regula-

The King County Council's Growth Management and Unincorporated Areas Committee (GMUAC) is currently reviewing two major packages of legislation: The 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update, and the Critical Areas Package, which consists of Critical Areas, Clearing and Grading, and Stormwater Ordinances.

If adopted, these policy changes will significantly impact all property owners in King County. Urban residents will be considering the Executive's Annexation Initiative, while rural residents will be facing additional restrictions on the use of their property.

The Executive's Annexation Initiative encourages all cities to annex their potential annexation area's (PAA's) by 2012. Residents who live in a city or within a city's PAA will be faced with a difficult decision of whether or not to annex their PAA. Residents living within a PAA will likely continue to see their levels of service decrease unless they are annexed into a city. Many cities feel that annexation will require an increase in taxes to fund services to annexed areas. Therefore, all consequences need to be weighed carefully.

Rural area residents have

voiced clear opposition to a number of the proposed policy changes to the Comprehensive Plan and the Critical Areas Ordinance. I have highlighted some of the most mentioned in our public meetings.

- For rural residential zoned



**Councilmember Hammond explains one of the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments to Citizens at a community meeting held in Fairwood.**

properties, there would be a limit on new land clearing to 35% of a parcel; the remaining 65% percent would need to be retained in forest or vegetation cover.

- For rural residential zoned properties, 'impacting impervious surface' would be limited to 10% of the parcel.
- Buffer widths would range from 25 to 100 feet in the urban area, and 50 to 300 feet in the rural area.
- A full drainage review would be triggered for adding 2000 square feet of impervious

surface (current regulation is 5000 square feet).

I attended each of the public hearings that were held throughout King County and want to thank each one of you who came and voiced your concerns about the proposed policy changes.

I want to encourage you to continue your involvement in this process particularly as the proposals go before the entire council. You can email additional comments directly to me at: [steve.hammond@metrokc.gov](mailto:steve.hammond@metrokc.gov) or call me with your comments: (206) 296-1009 or (800) 325-6165 x 6-1009.

## **Want to learn more about County Land Use Regulations?**

Review legislation, access background information, get the meeting schedule or testify online.

### **Critical Areas Ordinance**

[www.metrokc.gov/council/cao](http://www.metrokc.gov/council/cao)

### **Comprehensive Plan**

[www.metrokc.gov/council/comp-plan](http://www.metrokc.gov/council/comp-plan)

### **Keep updated**

Visit my web site to find out the latest information on County Land Use Regulations  
[www.metrokc.gov/hammond](http://www.metrokc.gov/hammond)



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## Let's be safe and legal as we celebrate the 4th

Last year, my office received a number of calls from constituents who were disturbed by neighbors who were not aware of the restrictions regarding the display of fireworks. We all enjoy the opportunity to celebrate this important national holiday, but we need to do so in a safe and legal manner.

Please remember that for unincorporated King County the following laws apply. Cities have similar laws. If you live within an incorporated city, you need to check with your city administration to obtain the laws that apply within your city. It is important to understand that there are fireworks sold that are not legal to discharge. It is also important to understand that there are time restraints on the discharge of all fireworks.\*

- Fireworks which are defined as *common fireworks* in this chapter are legal for sale, possession and use within unincorporated King County.
- *Common fireworks* includes ground and hand-held sparkling devices, including items commonly known as dipped sticks, sparklers, cylindrical fountains, cone fountains, illuminating torches, wheels, ground spinners, and flitter sparklers; smoke devices; helicopters; aeriels; spinners; roman candles; mines; shells; provided, that the term does not include fireworks commonly known as fire-crackers, salutes, chasers, skyrockets, and missile-type rockets.

We should encourage our families to enjoy this time of gathering and celebration within the limits of the law. Let's work together to make this a safe and enjoyable holiday.

\*Taken from King County Code, Title 6.26, Fireworks



The **sale, possession, use or discharge of any fireworks** prior to 12:00 noon on June 28th or after 12:00 midnight on July 4th each year is prohibited.

No common fireworks may be discharged except between the following hours:

**9:00 a.m. to 12:00 midnight on July 4th.**